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V O L T A I R E

IN THE

S P I R I T W O R L D.

John Surface

NEW-YORK:

S., A., & H. HOYT,

251 BROADWAY

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Nov 1878 for

V O L T A I R E

IN THE

S P I R I T W O R L D.

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Mrs. Elizabeth Sweet

NEW-YORK:

S., A., & H. HOYT,

251 BROADWAY

[1867]

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P R E F A C E.

In giving publicity to the following communication, which purports to be a sketch of the personal experience of Voltaire in the spirit world, it may perhaps be proper to state, briefly a few facts which have occurred in connection with that spirit.

A little more than three years ago, as Mrs. Sweet and myself were sitting in our room by ourselves, a spirit came and took possession of Mrs. S. and said, "that while on earth he had resided in France, and was known by the name of Voltaire." The announcement of this name startled the medium very much, for from the little she had heard of him she supposed he must be a personage to be feared and dreaded; and being somewhat frightened, she resisted, and did partially throw off his influence. I strove to calm and quiet her fears, and soon the spirit spoke to her through myself, in a kind and gentle manner, and succeeded in reassuring and soothing her, so that she no longer resisted his influence, and he then proceeded to give quite a lengthy communication, which has since been published in the "Sacred Circle," and called "The Soul's affinities." Since then he has visited us a number of times and given several communications.

More than two years ago, he told us that he would take some opportunity to give us a sketch of his experience in the spirit world. And although he frequently visited us, he said nothing about the promised history, until January last, when he requested us to give him an opportunity, when he would try and give what he had promised. Accordingly on the evening of the 19th of January he commenced to give it: and as he necessarily had to speak

slowly to enable me to write it down, it took three sittings, of about one hour each, on three different evenings, to finish it.

It is published without any alteration or correction, and whatever disconnection or want of smoothness there is in it, may perhaps be attributable to the interruptions which occurred during its delivery, (as Mrs. Sweet had to nurse her infant, and talk for the spirit at the same time.)

Neither the medium nor myself have ever read any of Voltaire's writings, and we know nothing of his history, except that he is spoken of as having been a great infidel; and whether it be Voltaire or not, who is the author of the following communication, others can judge perhaps, as well as ourselves. All we claim, is, that it came from another mind, and did not originate in ours.

The medium describes his influence as being powerful, his aspirations high, and noble, and his thoughts far reaching, grand, and elevating. While he is speaking through her, she seems to travel with him, and see that which he speaks of; and at times he soars up to where the grandeur and brightness of the countless glowing worlds is so great, that she shrinks, and struggles to return, fearing that the intensity of the light and glory which is opened to her vision, will dethrone her reason; and realizing in her case the truth of what we have often been told, that there was much to tell us, but we could not bear it yet, only a little at a time—as we could comprehend and receive it.

The sketch is published as an illustration of one of the many phases of spirit life.

G. SWEET.

(From the Sacred Circle.)

THE FIRST EXPERIENCE OF VOLTAIRE AS A SPIRIT.

GIVEN THROUGH MRS. SWEET.

In the bustle and confusion of the outer life, how utterly do men forget the last great scene to be enacted on the visible stage, before they enter the portals of the unknown land, whither they go, as they think, never to return. My life was one of deep yearning and unsatisfied longing. I was fierce and bitter, deep and grasping, in my search after the invisible wisdom, which was shut out from my hungry gaze. I could not be satisfied with what other men were : I desired something which they had not. The deep within me called to the deep, from which God once spake when he said "Let there be light." But with me there was no light. For humanity's surface presented to me nothing but a fleeting picture, filled with mimic shadows, called men and women. They lived either above me, or below me, I then knew not which. I was among them, yet not of them ; their forms and ceremonies sickened my soul, and provoked the ready sneer and the sarcastic remark.

When my spirit came into its earthly temple, it was altogether positive, in its manifestations. It had none of the ready sympathy, and the gentle charity, necessary to bear it pleasantly through life ; it was angular, and ever going out in quest of some real support on which to lean : but as the world then lived, it found no true resting place, but was tossed about from billow to billow, without an anchor, even left at the mercy of every wave which would dash it hither and thither. When I asked for proof from ancient lore, it failed to reply to my soul's deep yearnings,—all were to me as fables, voices of the imagination, enough perchance

for those to lean on, who desired no other authority, save what they were told was right; who prayed by rule, and served God by measure. I despised with a heartfelt contempt, the child's play which I saw daily enacted by kings and princes; and I felt within me a power, that could I give it utterance, would hurl all their air-built structures to the earth, and leave them, (poor idiots that they were) naked in their own ignorance, and clothed with nothing better, nor more durable, than the gold and tinsel with which they covered themselves, and gloried in their greatness. But it was I who was the madman. If they were as children, I had not thought of my own impetuous and unreasonable nature. I had not seen myself as the world saw me, for I had only sought how I might tear away their bright illusions—their dream-like fancies, and probe to the bottom, and lay bare to their gaze, the folly of their so called religion.

I did not deal in sarcasm and bitter invective, because it pleased me; I did not level the shafts of my satire because it was altogether pleasant, but it expressed more forcibly my feelings—it gave the keenest edge to that which I could utter, to cut and tear away the thin vail of conventionalism, and rank hypocrisy. Ah! my life was a sad one, in many respects; it was made up of so much that was discordant, that gave pain, that made the victim writhe in conscious knowledge of the truth of what I wrote; for I knew, and felt, that maledictions loud and deep, were poured out on my head. But what cared I? I gloried in them! And it made the waters of bitterness flow on more merrily in my soul, to see what an army arrayed themselves against me, striving to crush me into forgetfulness, that my voice might not be heard, that its sting might not be felt. And I defied them, for I exclaimed, "You, who have the mighty power of Christianity upon your side, the voices of past centuries, the power of kings and sceptres, of popes and of cardinals! You need not raise even a finger against so insignificant a pen as mine; for I am but one man, while you number in your ranks the whole christian and enlightened world! Why notice me at all? Let me utter my voice, my thought, and be silent. It is only a man who speaks, although it would seem from the number of my foes, that the incarnation of all evil had himself spoken through me." I did not for a moment shrink: it gave me power and strength, for then I knew that they were

standing upon a sandy foundation, when so slight a cause could so agitate and confound them.

I experienced many triumphs in my own way; they were the only pleasant spots which my earthly existence knew, for I did love power, I did desire to hold the reins in my hand, by which I felt I was controlling the human mind, and making it as a mere machine; and God knows since, how deeply I have repented the means which I used, to bend the mind, to bring it on my own plane of action. But it is past, and the memory of it now is humiliating to me. But I could not be other than I was, my character was strongly marked, and it left its impress behind it, long after the body had perished from remembrance. I met the angel of death calmly, fearlessly; I thought I had proved all things, and nothing more remained to be proved: I thought the yearning would die with me, and I was content to die, and be forgotten. I had often desired to know the philosophy of death. I had looked upon the fading flower, and the withering grass; they but served to enrich the earth; to spring forth in new forms to please the eye; and should not the elements of my body go to perform some like service? I might peer as I would, but no voice answered my call, and I was thrust back upon myself. Oh! it was a mountain which rested upon me, because I felt it all, yet could give it no utterance; and now the time had come to prove it. The limbs were nerveless, the eyes were glazing, the voice was mute: earth was fading—receding; but the intelligence—thought, thought lived still. The body no longer obeyed me—it was no longer mine. All sensation ceased, save in the top of my brain, and there was thought still; it would not die: but there it sat, independent and strong, apparently gathering up force, body, and form, unto itself. I made one effort to forget,—to die; I could not; but without an effort the thought still lived. And now I must say, the spirit left the body, and hovered above it. So intensely did I believe in the utter death of soul and body, or of intelligence with the body, that I did not desire to live; I strove to sleep, to forget, to blot myself out. Senseless worm! Nature's laws no longer obeyed me, my control over natural things was at an end. And I found myself,—where? you ask. I knew not where. Gloomy and sullen, refusing to believe myself a spirit, and yet feeling intensely alive, having no desire to be so—can you imagine the keen agony of that moment? Pray God that you never may! I who had denied this thing, was now compelled to believe it. What! must I myself, prove myself to have been deceived, in spite of all I had spoken and written? Was there still a reality in the weak imaginings

of what I had heard men prate? Oh no! I could not bear the thought, I would rather die ten thousand deaths than live to prove the falsity of my own position. It is true I lived, but how and in what condition? The location in which I was impelled to rest, presented no inducement to the sense, nor the eyesight; it appeared as one vast, uninhabited country, bleak and gloomy, mountainous, barren of all beauty; everything wore a sombre hued mantle, no life broke the leaden atmosphere, whose very silence oppressed me and pained my whole being. The very waters flowed along sluggishly in their murky depths, and seemed as though they were molten lava, death and disease lurking beneath their dark surface.

Alone, quite alone, I stood in this bleak solitude, still I was fearless and undismayed, still I sought to die, to be blotted out. I would not believe that this was other than a terrible phantasy of the brain. No human being was to be seen, yet I rejoiced in this, for had such appeared, I should have fled, and hidden myself in the clefts of the mountains. The thought of my own likeness appearing in any other form, was horrible to me. I wandered up and down, gloomy, wretched and incredulous. Proud and defiant, I sought to be still yet felt that knowing pain, that yearning desire to know more. I forgot myself in the struggle. But the silence and solitude were so incomprehensible, that I knew not where to turn. Whom could I ask for knowledge? Where would I bend my footsteps to find it?

"No," I said to myself, "This is a dream, a horrible dream, one of those strong delusions under which men labor who are grappling with disease and death. I shall return to earth and forget this; it will serve as a vision for some of the puppets to profit by." And again I held my head erect, waiting to awake from out of the unnatural trance.

I know not how long I waited, but that my heart sickened within me. A great heaviness and sense of desolation fell upon my spirit, a weakness overcame me, and I trembled with an undefined dread. I prayed—no I did not then pray—I wished that none might see me in the hour of my weakness and great humiliation. I gradually became accustomed to this scene of desolation and dreariness, it well accorded with my spirit's gloomy mood, and I spent long periods of time in meditation deep and profound. I wandered up and down the place I had been compelled to inhabit, seeking in vain for some trace by which I might discover the laws which forced me thus

to be the only inhabitant of the country. And I sought long and in vain; I asked not for sympathy nor love, I only asked for knowledge, and yet it was denied me. But I demanded it with a heart full of revilings toward the cause of all my misery. No answer came—no marvel that it did not to such as I then was. When I would blaspheme or when I would rail, it was alike impotent, there was no object upon which to vent my feelings, or to combat my vengeful threatenings.

I prided myself upon my solitary life. I said, "I desire no human sympathy, I could exist without it, within myself." Thus far I had been looking without, and had become weary, O, very weary of the changeless prospect. I turned to look within. Ah! what was there to see but a fountain filled to overflowing with bitterness and unbelief, of railing against everything good and lovely; a heart of adamant, walled around with brass, impervious alike to fear or love. I prayed for slumber; as well might the eagle slumber while winging his way through the pure ether of heaven's blue arch, with the sun's rays blazing in his eyes, as I could forget for a moment, that I lived, that I thought, that I knew there was a something beyond myself, which I yet knew not of.

I know not how long I tarried in this place, but it were a very long time; the sameness, the monotony and silence was dreadful, the little knowledge, only gave additional fear and dread of what might next be revealed. Oh! death to me had been the gate of horrors, the plaything of mystery, growing greater and denser as I proceeded. I knew not how much the pleasure of my earth-life had consisted in opposing, in assailing and setting at nought the opinions of my fellow man. It had called forth my energy, it had given play to my intellect, diversion, and recreation to my every day existence; and now, there was none but myself, to strive against myself. O! the utter, utter misery, the want of companionship which I then experienced! At first I had thought I would flee from the face of a fellow being, I abhorred the thought of a witness to the downfall of my theories, but the rocks gave me no reply when I upbraided them for their silence; the winds did not fan my check caressing, but harshly, the trees appeared as though formed of rock, so unbending in their appearance, everything seemed locked up against me. The grass was crisp and hard, and when I sought to hear the waters ripple there was but a hollow echo, as of a moan, from their turbid depths. I

saw no twinkling star, no silver moon; all was inanimate save me,—and who—what, was I? A thing of life, of what value was it? I had better be a stone, for then I would be in keeping with the scene. My stoicism gave way, the hard walls of adamant were beginning to break down in utter wretchedness for want of sympathy, and I groaned aloud, “who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” And now there arose within me a desire for sympathy. Of something which was pervaded by human life. A dog would have delighted me, it would have called forth a flood of tears; something, anything to which I might unbosom my overcharged heart.

The still small voice, whose silvery tones I had crushed back for so many years, now came up faint and indistinctly, as a silver thread, the slightest jar might have snapt the feeling and smothered its tone forever in my heart. But the voice grew stronger, and I wished, O how earnestly, for some human feeling to be aroused within my breast. Tears came at length—strong and mighty was the struggle, but the citadel yielded, the strong man bowed down and wept like a child. And I prayed, as I had prayed when an infant at my mother’s knee; and I had prayed to God all along, before I had known it, but now I felt it.

It was the beginning of repentance—the breaking down of the barriers which had so long kept me separated from the better impulses of love and human sympathy. Too long had I steeled my spirit against every power, but that which I vainly conceived was of myself and within me, I disdained to own other authority than my own; but now I wished to flee from myself. I wished but to know that there was a power beside myself, that I might see it. My earth-life, rose up and confronted me with nothing but dark images of distrust in all things sacred, of reverence for nothing good. Gloomy picture! How it pained me to look back upon the seeds of dissension, and unhappiness, which I had planted in thousands of hearts, I turned away and strove to shut my eyes upon the dark picture, but go where I would, my sins still found me out, they followed me, and ten thousand vices seemed to upbraid me, and point their fingers toward me, as the author of their great unhappiness. I could not curse God and die, I could not longer oppose the evidence of a power which made me a very child in helplessness, but not in innocence. My grief was still for myself, my repentance was not of the right kind, I was still rebellious in the knowledge of my suffering, for I

did not feel that I merited such punishment as had been meted out to my sins ; and I wished if there was a power wise and good, that I might be made to feel it. If I had sinned beyond recall, I desired to know for what I was thus harshly judged.

There arose within me at length a most intense desire for some intelligent being, with whom I might take counsel, but none came near me. Long and dreary seemed the time which I spent in that place ; reviewing the past, uncertain, and unprepared for the future. One, by one, my stern resolutions gave way, and with no witness, save the voice within, I was compelled to acknowledge in that dreadful solitude, that there was a power, grand, supreme, and inscrutable. My spirit was bowed in shame, and deep contrition to the very earth, and I prayed, Oh so humbly, that the great Intelligence would vouchsafe to hear me ; to speak in some manner, to break the wretched sense of loneliness which was becoming insupportable. And I slumbered long and deeply ; and a vision was given me, for I thought I knew, that bright forms stood beside me—that they soothed my weary spirits—that they spoke in silvery tones of love and peace to my breaking heart ; and I thought I had left that place of gloom, with those bright guides ; its chill air no longer oppressed and benumbed my movements, its death like quiet was only a dreadful dream. But I thank thee O my God, that it was no dream, but a bright and glorious reality. I had left that place, and with it, all the repulsive attributes, all the dark garments of sin and selfishness, unbelief and arrogance, which had so long been my close companions. The heart which had seemed as of marble, cold and insensible, was now fresh and warm.

O I had found sympathy ! Human voices greeted me, they took me by the hands, they called me brother, and they said, I had come up from out of the vale of repentance—that I had learned that God was love, and all powerful, that I was but a spirit who depended upon that great cause for every breath which gave me life. O how sweet were their tones, and how gentle and kind their looks. They led me along by a pleasant path, and sought to make me forget the dark place which had been my abode so long.

EXPERIENCE OF VOLTAIRE AS A SPIRIT.

PART SECOND.

I still trembled, uncertain, and fearful that I should have to return. But the spirit who had acted as my guide thus far, bade me not to fear, for I had lived there long enough to know my own power, and my own strength of endurance. I had learned to crave, yes, even to beg for the sympathy which I had before so despised; I would have hailed with joy the most ignorant companion which might have been given me, so deeply and sensibly was I made to know how much I had to depend upon others, who formed between me and the Deity the chain of electric intelligence.

Now I found I was wholly ignorant of all the laws controlling the newly opened phase of existence before me. Now I knew that I lived. It was a pleasant hoping life, and there were within me ten thousand thoughts, new and undefined, asking for knowledge, wishing to grasp it all at once, to compass the whole at a glance; but fell back upon myself weak and nerveless.

“Brother,” said my guide, “first learn the principles which govern the vast system of wisdom revealed before thee, then lay the foundation, stone by stone; it is thine own temple, make it as beautiful as thou desirest, but mind that thou dost hew the stones out of the quarry of eternal wisdom. Too long hast thou dealt in the imagination; too far-fetched have been thy groundless theories; therefore build not a baseless fabric, which shall crumble away from before thine eyes, in the hour of thy need, and thy trial. The structure which thou didst erect for thyself while on earth, was not sufficient for thy support when thou hadst left it.

Therefore be free, and try thy newly fledged wings, and see if thou canst find aught worthy of thy labor, in this sphere. Long thou didst stand alone in thy supposed strength and might, stand alone still, when thou canst, but when thou dost need assistance, thou hast brothers and equals, who will gladly aid thee. Thou

dost behold but a hand's breadth, vast and boundless as these domains appear to thee, and yet thou canst not tread one inch of this holy ground, but what is teeming with hidden knowledge, precious wisdom.

Dost thou behold the many souls who are passing and repassing thee? their numbers seem countless, but every one of them is more exalted than thou, because they are more humble. But thou hast not outlived all of earth and its errors, yet thou wilt overcome them one by one; and daily thou wilt acknowledge that man's heart is a universe, wherein is contained all the mystery, all the beauty, and all the love of the divine Godhead, constantly unfolding, a spark at a time; but never, never, canst thou imagine the heights and the depths to which it shall reach in the unending cycles of eternal thought."

I was fired with enthusiasm; I would now obtain new knowledge, new power; I would go back and confess my errors, and astonish mankind by the new revelation. It was a boyish dream; conceived in a moment but not to be carried out until many, many long years had rolled away, and been forgotten in eternity's great gulf.

Said my guide, "Dost thou conceive that thou wouldest be welcome shouldst thou again return to earth? Nay, I tell thee thine own followers would hoot at thee; they would call thee a thing of the imagination. Dost thou not know, that the wise, the good, and the loving who have passed from thy world to this, long before thee, have endeavored to do the same thing which strikes thee now as a novel idea? They have gone back and been received by the few, but refused by the many; because man understood not the goodness of God, nor the laws of his own being. Thou thyself couldst not return, for thou hast placed a great barrier in thine own way. But fix thy thoughts, and use thy energies in thy present home; thou dost love power; thou canst obtain it. Thou askest for knowledge, it may be had for labor; thy face is now turned in the right direction. Thou hast felt thine own weakness, yea, and thou hast felt thine own strength unaided by the power above thee. As thou wert great in evil to thy fellow men, it is thy privilege and thy duty to become great and mighty in the benefits which thou canst confer upon them. Thou canst become an instrument now to counteract the very power which thou didst labor to build up:

and inasmuch as thou didst crush back the divine voice speaking within thee,—striving for utterance, but grieved and silenced by thy power, thou must now go to oth rs, and call it forth in their hearts strengthen them in their struggles, that they may not be as thou wast: and thou shalt become a beloved one among us, when thy works shall testify to the greatness of thy love, and the repentance of thy soul. For remember, that for every angelic gift which is given thy soul, tenfold labor will be required of thee to balance the gift. By thy works thou wilt render thyself worthy to mingle with the wise and the pure; and only as thy love to God developes within thy soul, shalt thou be permitted to know and feel its sympathies with those like thyself. Thy life was peculiar, even so thy repentance bears the same form of reparation."

Wisely he spoke: he knew me better than I knew myself. Long and earnestly did I labor, thought-laden. I communed with the spirits of the past only in spirit—they could not come near me: and I conceived of such mysterious knowledge to be obtained by me, such God-like power, that at times it almost maddened me. I could not understand it, so overwhelming did it seem. New light, beauties, fresh and glowing from the hand of Deity, would strike me speechless. Infinite wisdom! the like of which only angels could beardown in small portions to the little pulsating thing, called spirit. Oh, how I travailed! The thought, the power which came upon me was too great, I was smaller than a particle of dust in the sunbeam. I was less than a thought, and yet I lived. Oh life! Strange mystery! When the immensity of power would crush you out of existence, then the spirit asserts its kindred with divinity; it cannot die, it will not be blotted out. It lives as I lived, to feel the resistless knowledge which I had asked for; and when it did come, Oh, I could only bow my head, and thank my God that I lived. Man, could I tell you how my spirit had soared far up among the wonders, the galaxy of his star-gemmed beauty. I would ask the countless worlds to speak, and send down an echo, that ye might know how very glorious, how vast and extended beyond your grandest conceptions, are the systems which He holds in His hands. I would tell to man the bright destiny which awaits him, but I cannot—only a very small part, because words, such as you know, are inadequate to express the mystery of power. And then I would tell you of the power within man. I would show you in its varied phases of development the

thought which is given to man, which raises him far from earth among the archangels in power. And I would tell you how one great mind may struggle, and force his way upward, leaving behind him countless millions, toiling and striving; while he may soar up as the eagle, bold and fearless. And he may hear sounds and see sights, he may know mysteries such as man hath never dreamed of; such as spirits have not seen; such as the archangels dare not reveal because it belongs not to the earth. It never descends; but is accessible to him who grasps it. Who will have it, it is his own. Oh, when man does know the power which lies within himself, he is an archangel; his progress cannot be opposed, it tends upward, towards the divine center; it draws him near that blazing light, and into that vortex which is only approached by the sons and daughters who lived far back in the olden days, when they walked and talked with God as children.

There is a land of rest for those who need it, and there are worlds of research for those who deserve it, teeming with light, redolent with beauty, inexhaustible in wisdom; and so illimitable that all humanity which ever has been, or ever will be upon this small center of intelligence, will be but an infant school, in numbers and size.

Children of earth, ask for knowledge, and it will be given you. When ye have received it, then ye know that ye have power. Cease not to struggle, do not get weary, nor faint by the wayside. Ye have only taken hold of the first link in the sparkling chain which leads up to the grand center; countless millions of times shall ye revolve around it before ye reach it.

But I cannot give you more. My voice is faint and weak; your words are few, and inadequate to convey my thoughts. I have shown you very imperfectly the first chapter in my life, when I entered the abode of spirits. I tried to give you a glance into the upper glories, but the time has not yet come. The heavens are unfolding as a scroll of light, and the day of new things is dawning upon the children of men, and they shall know, because God hath willed it so, and sent his holy spirits to tell them, that they are free, because truth is free, and light is free. And God hath said "Let there be light," and lo, it cometh so soon as men can bear it. Therefore prepare yourselves to receive it.

EXPERIENCE OF VOLTAIRE AS A SPIRIT.

PART THIRD.

After having entered upon the duties of my new state of life, I again commenced the study of character; and I discovered that it was still men and women with whom I had to deal. Their pursuits and their nature surely were different from those I had just left, but still there was the same peculiarity of character manifested in different degrees, in every individual whom I accosted. True, the sphere in which I was placed was peopled by those of an elevated character, but how plainly did the earth-life of each one portray itself upon every lineament of their countenances. It marked their actions; controlled their associations; and for a time I almost forgot that I had left earth's plane for another and higher.

It was a curious study to observe how each one approached me according to the feelings which he had imbibed respecting me. The rigid churchman would approach me cautiously, carefully; and express his feelings in the form of a prayer—that I had been snatched as a brand from the burning; that I had been stopped short in my mad career, and brought suddenly to a sense of my awful condition, and then leave me with a promise to help me with his prayers. The free thinker, the philosopher, they would take me by the hand and welcome me to the land of reality, the birthplace of wisdom. It was very pleasant to meet with those whose minds were free and expanding. They could overlook my weakness and give me strength; they could understand why I had committed the unpardonable sin of speaking my thoughts, although they brought condemnation, lasting, bitter, and deep, upon my memory.

I was in a strange company, and strange emotions filled my soul. They were all striving for something, just as eagerly as while on earth, and yet, I could not sympathise with them in the

manner in which they made search for the all absorbing object, which was to confer great happiness. Many were contented to move slowly and cautiously, to labor laboriously for a little, when with the same effort they might have received a great deal ; they were unable to grasp it, and so they went plodding along.

Some approached me with marvelous stories of what they had seen and heard—the mysteries which their eyes had beheld, and their hands had touched. But to me their tale was a fleeting shadow. I wanted the proof; to see, to know for myself, was what I desired ; because as often as they went away, they returned empty handed ; nothing benefitted, nothing wiser, for they returned into the same place which they had occupied before their departure.

The spirit habitation is one perpetual panoramic change. As the spirit arises and develops, it leaves behind it the old surroundings, and is constantly gaining new positions and facilities for improvement. This is always in accordance with the rapidity of its desires.

I had commenced far back, in humility and prayer, I had raised my eyes upward ; I was building a foundation which I hoped would tower up into grand proportions, the beauty and symmetry of which, it would make my heart glad to look upon. Step by step I groped my way, using every aid, from all sources within my reach. How ardently I searched into the deep and hidden things, which I knew were concealed from my hungry gaze. I traveled over great space, that I might see and converse with those minds of the past ages who had acquired the knowledge for which I sought : and the means were given me to make my researches successful. I could not long remain in the presence of those wise men, for when I would draw thought from the storehouse of their knowledge, their words would fill me with unspeakable wonder, yes, even one word would contain a volume of knowledge which I could not grasp, because of its magnitude in comparison with my limited power of receiving it. To me it was not a world of shadows, but of great and startling realities ; not only did the immortal spirit speak, but every leaf, every blade of grass, every sun kissed flower, gave forth a language deep thrilling and impressive. Well it is for man, that his spirit cannot comprehend its own littleness, nor its own greatness. Well

it is that for him there is a school, wherein he may glean the first lessons fitted to the scope of his awakening intellect. And let him pray that he may not know the power, the world of power within himself, until the world without, in all its mysterious phases, physical and spiritual, is understood, analysed by him.

All men cannot be gods in wisdom ; and some must be children, before they can see the power which lurks within themselves.

He of whom I spoke before, counseled me not to seek too much at first. And yet knowledge was so beautiful ! It gave me power, and power was what I loved : but now I did not want to exercise it as I once had done, to swerve men's minds from the better promptings which they could receive from without as well as from within ; but I desired it for myself, that I might leave the busy bustling multitude behind me, and soar away into the illimitable space alone, to grapple with its mysteries unabashed ; to look upon the dread secrets of the Deity's universe. My thoughts rose higher, my desires sunk deeper, than my power extended. Then I said, "I will go to those who know that which I thirst for. They shall tell me how to obtain it ; they shall lead me to what my soul so earnestly craves." They shook their heads at my request, and told me I was presumptuous, "for," said they, "you are but a child, a new comer into this state of being. Labor patiently, as your fellow men are doing, and prepare yourself by degrees to receive the unfolding glories which it is your privilege to behold." They but mocked me. I turned in mute hopelessness ; my spirit chafed, and beat against its prison bars because of the delay. "Why should I wait ? I fear not ; I pause not : I am strong to endure ; I will encounter great and unheard of pangs, to be admitted within the sacred precincts of hidden things ! The light may dazzle ; the sight may even blind me, but why this knawing desire ? Why this drawing upward, this attraction, which stops not midway, but is lost in dim conjecture, and unsatisfied longing ? I see a glimpse of the world beyond ; they call it a sphere, and yet it is but a higher state—a purer atmosphere. It is heaven within my view : can I not reach it ? I behold it as a sunlighted landscape of ravishing beauty—mountain and valley—hill and dale—ocean and streamlet—moon and stars—all natural, but Oh, how suddenly beautiful in their great and expanded proportions ! Naught separates the beauteous picture from my view but a cloud-like

haze, a thin transparent veil. It is distant, but I see it, and the voice within me tells me it is my own. Then why will I tarry here. I have learned all that is fitting for me to know, and yet I cannot ascend." My soul was sad; its yearning desire was unfulfilled. It is true there were numberless minds surrounding me whose knowledge was greater than mine, whose natures were more loving and benevolent, more social in their feelings towards their fellow men,—but the intelligence from which I sprung, thus formed my being, and could I recreate myself other than I was? No, I cared not for the dazzling prospects of bliss, and joy, and beauty, which men called happiness. To me it was dream-like and misty, leaving naught but hollow echoes to fill up the void when the scene had passed.

Do you call me ungrateful, and ungodly; denying and denouncing that beautiful heaven which the Father had spread out before my wondering eyes? Oh no, my devotion was not of the external part, my desire was not for the things which are seen by the eyes alone. In the depths of my soul I thanked my God for so much of light as he had vouchsafed me, but I struggled to get nearer. Ten thousand newly formed worlds of thought and wisdom and knowledge seemed bursting into life from the center of my own being.

What was I? Less than a man, and yet within me were the elements of a God; power, strong, grasping, earnest, beseeching for something, anything to unlock the pent up fountains and let the waters flow forth, that I might look upon that which had been within myself. If it was life and thought, then was it reaching after the center from which it emanated. Was it power? Oh, then let me give it scope and compass! Was it good or evil? I knew it was good, the still small voice which urged my utterance told me that a universe of thought was rushing across the threshold of my soul. For I stood alone, alone, trembling with eagerness to pierce through the veil—to behold face to face those whose names were almost forgotten upon earth. I would see them, and hear them, I would walk and talk familiarly as with brothers; for had not they struggled too, as I was now doing? I stood upon a plane of glorious beauty, and transparent light, but then I could see that beyond, which was more inviting still.

Why should I linger below when there were messengers constantly bearing back and forth some spirits who had lived out their allot-

ted time and were ascending to partake of the joys beyond. I could not wait, so long a time would crush and paralyze my spirit's impatient throbings. O, I lived long years, which you would count but as days so slowly did the time pass away, my desires were so urgent.

At length I was counselled to prepare for my journey and what should have composed my garb, and rendered me a fitting object to approach that place. I was clad in robes by wise and mighty counsellors; faith and perseverance, humility and progress, were written on each garment that I wore, and then commenced my long journey through the wonders of space; faith the star which guided my pathway, hope the light which lured me on, strength the staff upon which I leaned, prayer the bread which filled my soul, and the celestial heaven the home which beckoned me upward to survey its glorious wonders.

VOLTAIRE.

O D E.

As on the desert strand
Of island far at sea,
The shipwrecked sailor waits for morn,
So waits my soul for thee.

As in the arctic realm,
When night is on the snow,
Slow move the hours that bring the day,
So time to me moves slow.

And yet I wait in hope—
I know that in the skies
The sun of hope will beam, and then
To me again arise.

And as above the night
Rises the day's bright beam,
Thy presence will my spirit fill
With light and joy supreme.

W.

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